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Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DODE-00 GSA-02 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-10
L-03 ACDA-12 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 SP-02 TRSE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 EB-08 DOTE-00
OTPE-00 /071 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/RPM: JAFROEBE; MPSTRUTZEL
APPROVED BY EUR/RPM: SJLEDOGAR
OSD(ISA/EUR): COL ALLEN (TEL)
OJCS(J-3/JOD): LTC HOHLSTEIN (INFO)
GSA/FPA: JSPLAIN (SUBS)
INR/DDR/PMT: WDHOWELLS (SUBS)
INR/DDR/RWE: HENDERSON (SUBS)
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION
CSA, CNO, CSAF, CMC
----------052094 310216Z /14
O 310116Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE
INFO USDEL MC IMMEDIATE
USNMR SHAPE BE
USLOSAC LANT
USCINCEUR
USCINCLANT NORFOLK VA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 082618

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: NATO, US, MPOL

SUBJECT: HILEX-8 OBSERVATIONS:PART II (GENERAL, POLITICAL, MILITARY)

REFS: (A) USDELMC 216/78, 221909Z MAR 78
(B) STATE 077909, 252024Z MAR 78
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(C) USNATO 3228, 291849Z MAR 78

1. IN GENERAL, WE AGREE WITH MISSION'S ASSESSMENT OF HILEX-8 (REF C), AND MISSION IS AUTHORIZED TO COMMENT ALONG THESE LINES AT COEC MEETING MARCH 31. SOME OF OUR OWN COMMENTS THAT FOLLOW REPEAT POINTS MADE BY THE MISSION, SINCE REF C ARRIVED JUST AS OUR CRITIQUE WAS IN THE LAST STAGES OF PREPARATION.

2. WE ATTRIBUTE THIS OUTCOME TO A SOUND SCENARIO,

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TO THE VIGOR WITH WHICH IT WAS PLAYED AT NATO AND ELSEWHERE BOTH IN ITS POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS, AND TO THE USE OF SOVIET AND EEC RESPONSE CELLS. THE EXERCISE THUS FORCED PLAYERS TO WRESTLE WITH THE INHERENT DILEMMAS THAT WOULD CONFRONT NATO IN A REAL CRISIS OF THIS SORT, DILEMMAS WHICH WOULD INCLUDE:

-- HOW TO MOBILIZE ALLIANCE FORCES AND BRING THEM TO FULL READINESS, WHILE PRESERVING THE DIPLOMATIC FLEXIBILITY NECESSARY TO TRY TO ACHIEVE A NON-MILITARY SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS. ALTHOUGH THE RETURN OF US DUAL-BASED FORCES AND US REINFORCEMENT OF EUROPE WITH TWO PLUS TEN FORCES ARE NOT NECESSARILY A NEGOTIATING LEVER, THE DECISIONS AS TO WHEN TO DISPATCH HOW MANY OF THESE FORCES AND HOW TO USE THIS ACTION POLITICALLY ARE FUNDAMENTAL POLICY QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE ANSWERED ONLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CRISIS AT THAT POINT. (THIS WOULD STILL ALLOW EARLY DISPATCH OF THE FORWARD PARTIES OF THESE FORCES TO EUROPE -- AS WE DID IN HILEX-8.)

-- HOW TO FORMULATE A CREDIBLE NEGOTIATING PROPOSAL THAT WOULD TRY TO DEFUSE THE CRISIS BOTH IN TERMS OF:
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(A) A MILITARY PULLBACK ON BOTH SIDES -- THE ASYMMETRY OF NATO AND WARSAW PACT MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS AT AN EARLY STAGE IN THE CRISIS MEANS THAT NATO MUST INSIST ON A MUCH LARGER MILITARY DE-ESCALATION BY THE WARSAW PACT THAN THE DE-ESCALATION NATO COULD GIVE.

(B) A POLITICAL-ECONOMIC PULL-BACK -- A SOVIET EXPLOITATION OF EASTERN EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES, IN A SITUATION OF EXPANDING EAST-WEST ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CONTACTS, WOULD MEAN THAT NATO COULD OFFER FEW CONCESSIONS THAT WOULD HELP THE SOVIETS ALLEVIATE THE BASIC CAUSES OF CRISIS TENSION IN EASTERN EUROPE.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT: WE BELIEVE THE EXERCISE AS STRUCTURED AND CARRIED OUT WAS FUNDAMENTALLY SOUND. THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE SUGGESTIONS FOR MODIFICATIONS THAT, AS ALWAYS, MIGHT FURTHER THE USEFULNESS OF FUTURE HILEX EXERCISES.

(A) SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT IN NATO CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES.

-- COMMUNICATIONS: THE NATO-WIDE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM SEEMED TO GET OVERLOADED QUICKLY. THIS PROBLEM PRESUMABLY WOULD BE AGGRAVATED GREATLY IF SUBORDINATE NATO COMMANDS AND NATIONAL COMMANDS WOULD ALSO BE

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INVOLVED. SECURE VOICE COMMUNICATIONS ALSO WERE
FREQUENTLY INADEQUATE AS TO THE SPEED OF CONNECTION

AS WELL AS THEIR QUALITY ONCE CONNECTION WAS ESTABLISHED.

-- NATO ALERT SYSTEM: THE COMPLEXITY OF NATO ALERT
MEASURES, AS IT CAME OUT IN THE PLAY, ARGUES FOR
CURRENT NATO EFFORTS TO RECATAGORIZE THE MEASURES INTO
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MORE EASILY COMPREHENDED AND MANAGEABLE GROUPINGS.

-- LOCATION OF FORCES: IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE AT
NATO HQ AND IN CAPITALS THE GROSS DATA ON THE DEPLOYMENT
OF NATO AND NATIONAL FORCES.

(B) SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE EXERCISE SCENARIO.

-- BALANCE OF POLITICAL AND MILITARY PLAY: IT SEEMED
TO US THAT THE SCENARIO STARTED OFF WITH SUCH AN
ADVANCED MILITARY BUILDUP ON THE ORANGE SIDE THAT
POSSIBILITIES FOR PRELIMINARY DIPLOMATIC MOVES HAD
BEEN OVERTAKEN, AND THAT MOST OF THE PLAY WAS DEVOTED
TO CATCHING UP ON THE NATO MILITARY SIDE. FOR THE
PURPOSES OF HILEX--AS OPPOSED TO WINTEX--EXERCISES,
IT MIGHT BE WORTH CONSIDERING STARTING OFF WITH A HIGH
DEGREE OF POLITICAL TENSION BUT LOWER LEVELS OF ORANGE
MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS -- E.G. FEWER NAVAL DEPLOYMENTS
AND NO SPRING TROOP ROTATION. IT MIGHT EVEN BE POSSIBLE
IN THE COURSE OF A FIVE-DAY EXERCISE, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR
THE DPC TO CONSIDER AND IMPLEMENT FIRST A DIPLOMATIC
INITIATIVE WHICH FAILS, AND THEN FOLLOW WITH A
POLITICAL-MILITARY INITIATIVE.

-- INCIDENTS INJECTED INTO EXERCISE PLAY: MORE
INCIDENTS FROM EASTERN EUROPE AS THE ORIGIN OF THE
CRISIS WOULD HAVE BEEN USEFUL. SIMILARLY, MORE
INCIDENTS THAT WOULD HAVE INVOLVED A CHINESE EFFORT
TO WORRY THE SOVIET EASTERN FLANK WOULD HAVE ADDED
TO THE EXERCISE'S REALISM. LASTLY, THIRD-WORLD
INCIDENTS WERE TOO NUMEROUS AND OF TOO LITTLE RELEVANCE
TO THE EXERCISE. WE ACCEPT OUR SHARE OF THE BLAME
ON BOTH THE CHINESE AND THE THIRD-WORLD SCORES.
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-- WE AGREE WITH MISSION PROPOSAL (PARA 2, REF C)
THAT WINTEX-CIMEX 1979 BE SCHEDULED FOR JUNE OF NEXT
YEAR.

-- WE AGREE IN PRINCIPLE WITH THE MISSION (PARA 5, REF C)

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THAT HIGHER-LEVEL WASHINGTON PARTICIPATION IS DESIRABLE. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, HOWEVER, IT WOULD NOT BE USEFUL TO HOLD OUT HIGH HOPES FOR THIS. MISSION SHOULD

RECOGNIZE THAT HIGHER-LEVEL PARTICIPATION WAS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT THIS YEAR, GIVEN THE PRESS OF PREPARATIONS FOR THE NATO SUMMIT.

4. RELATIONSHIP OF HILEX-8 EVENTS TO ACTUAL REINFORCEMENTS COMMITMENTS:

WE RECOGNIZE THAT POLICY QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED IN THE CONTEXT OF EACH DEVELOPING CRISIS. NEVERTHELESS, AS A RESULT OF THE PLAY IN HILEX-8 WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE EARLY US REINFORCEMENT OF NATO WITH DUAL-BASED AND 2 PLUS 10 FORCES MIGHT BE VIEWED AS AN AUTOMATIC ITEM FOR NEGOTIATION. IF THE NORMAL PEACETIME ASYMMETRY IN THE CONVENTIONAL BALANCE IS BEING FURTHER EXACERBATED THROUGH INTENSE WARSAW PACT MILITARY PREPARATIONS -- AS PORTRAYED BY HILEX-8 -- WE BELIEVE THE EARLY DISPATCH OF DUAL-BASED US FORCES WOULD BE HIGHLY IMPORTANT TO NATO'S DEFENSE POSTURE AND AS A POSITIVE SIGNAL OF NATIONAL INTENT AND A VISIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF ALLIANCE SOLIDARITY. OUR 1967 AGREEMENT WITH NATO ON DUAL-BASING CONTAINS THE UNDER-STANDING THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD ORDER THE RETURN OF THESE FORCES WHEN HE CONSIDERED IT APPROPRIATE. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ALLIES ON HILEX, YOU SHOULD REAFFIRM OUR INTENT TO DISPATCH FROM CONUS THE INITIAL ELEMENTS OF THE ABOVE REINFORCEMENTS AS SOON

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AS POSSIBLE AFTER RECEIVING NATIONAL COMMAND AUTHORITY APPROVAL AND HOST NATION CONCURRENCE. FURTHER, WE SUGGEST THAT IF THE POLITICAL CLIMATE BE SUCH THAT REINFORCEMENTS BECOME AN ITEM FOR NEGOTIATIONS TO DIFFUSE OR COOL RISING TENSIONS, IT MIGHT BE MORE APPROPRIATE TO CONSIDER STOPPING THE FLOW OF FORCES ALREADY BEGUN OR DELAY THE FURTHER DEPLOYMENT OF TROOPS IN ADDITION TO THOSE CLASSIFIED AS DUAL-BASED IN THE CURRENT DPQ RESPONSE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 sep 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EMERGENCY PLANNING, HILEX-8, COMMITTEE MEETINGS, REGIONAL DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE082618
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/RPM: JAFROEBE; MPSTRUTZEL
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D780139-0346
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803126/baaafcgs.tel
Line Count: 211
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fb6e5ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: (A) USDELMC 216/78, 221909Z MAR 78 (B) STATE 077909, 252024Z MAR 78
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3167458
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HILEX-8 OBSERVATIONS:PART II (GENERAL, POLITICAL, MILITARY)
TAGS: MPOL, US, NATO
To: USNATO INFO MC MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fb6e5ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014